



BLESSED FRANCISCO AND JACINTA MARTO

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THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS' JOURNEY (3)

The words of the Blessed Virgin in Fatima call insistently on people to be converted, to make reparation for the many sins of an unbelieving world. At the same time, this reparation is to be seen as a means of securing

understanding of sin and of reparation. In Fatima, Mary wished to show our unbelieving world the whole tragedy of sin, and summon it to reparation.

**The recapitulation
of salvation is the total
victory over sin,
through the humiliation
of Christ on the Cross.**



Fatima - Hungarian Calvary. The crucifixion scene.

**Mary, too, was there
beside her Son
in the moment
of the realisation
of the salvation
of all human beings.**

the conversion and salvation of «poor sinners», to use the little Shepherds' way of describing them. Moreover, it must be offered not only to God and to Christ our Lord, but also to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

If we view the Message of Fatima in the light of the medieval doctrine of St Anselm, as reparation made by Christ for the whole of humanity, we shall easily understand that, here on earth, each human being must make reparation for his or her own sins, and also for those of others, in other words for sinners. This principle applies in particular to offences committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In this case, each person is bound to an even greater extent because, since Mary is above all creatures, she is closer to God and to Jesus Christ the Redeemer. It follows that all the sins and offences committed by human beings against God and the divine Heart of Jesus also affect the Immaculate Heart of Mary; they affect it and wound it.

People today have difficulty in perceiving this reality and pay little attention to it. Nevertheless, warned now by the Message of Fatima, they must become more aware of it. Anyone who meditates attentively on the words of Our Lady of Fatima will easily realise that they seek to lead us to a deeper understanding of salvation and of the mystery of the Heart of Jesus, and also to a deeper

In order to understand this requirement of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we propose to analyse three fundamental points in the light of Holy Scripture. Bearing in mind its theological nature, we ask you to appreciate that, in our presentation of these points, we cannot but use a number of theological terms as well as some foreign words.

1. The place of Mary in God's overall plan and in the Mystery of Christ.

There is no question of 'new revelations' in the Message of Fatima. It is, rather, a question of the fundamental truths of Sacred Scripture and tradition, realities concerning the world as a whole and the history of salvation which had slowly been played down, buried and forgotten, and which must now be brought back to life in the consciences of men, of the world and of the Church. Only when seen from this point of view does one understand the true significance and the extreme importance of the Message and of the appeal from Our Lady of Fatima. Mary does not ask for any particular thing linked with our own time, valid only for our own situation, as for example to help us in our temporal necessities, in our afflictions, in the different wars being waged around us. No, what she asks is for something absolutely necessary and universal. She addresses

herself unconditionally to all men and women, to the entire world, and points to her own specific overall mission in the plan of salvation.

Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is not a private pious devotion which is very useful for some and less so for others. It is not a last-resort form of protection, or a merit, but a universal need for individuals, for the Church and for the whole of humanity.

It is an indication that the position and salvific importance of Mary must be viewed in the order of salvation, and, specifically, in the aspect of her Immaculate Heart. Mary reveals her Immaculate Heart in Fatima, as it were in line with the transcendent God and with Christ the Redeemer. All mankind's sins and offences are committed against God and against Christ, they affect God directly. However, as sins and offences, they are also committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, because in Mary they are committed against God. It is for this reason that the same reparation that is offered by men and women to God and to the divine Heart of Jesus is equally valid for Mary.

2. *Sin is not merely a word
but first and foremost a true blasphemy against God
and a profanation of the name of God.*

Mary speaks only of one sin, «of the blasphemy, the injuries and offences» committed against Christ and against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and She says this, above all, with sadness, in a beseeching tone of voice, as in a loving complaint and a heartfelt request.

Here one might well ask: why is it necessary to make reparation specifically in the place of others, for the blasphemies committed by others?

And one could object: today, one hardly ever hears blasphemies, which are sins against the second commandment of God; other sins are committed much more frequently and are more serious.

However, this is a deceptive illusion. Mary is touching here on the deepest wound and is releasing the rottenness hidden within. Man, in fact, does not really know what sin is.

In Fatima, Our Lady wanted to teach, and to show, what sin really is, that which contains within itself the root of all sinful desires and perverse activities, by pointing insistently to what, according to Holy Scripture, «sin» really is. Sin is not merely a word; rather it is, first and foremost, a true blasphemy, a profanation of the holy name of God. Sin is blasphemy, it is stealing the image of God, it is profaning the Name of God which human beings possess not only juridically but also ontologically in their hearts, and to which they are required to give glory, so that they may fulfil their own lives.

3. *The true Biblical meaning of «reparation»*

a) adoration is comparable to reparation
b) adoration as reparation is necessary for the salvation of sinners

c) adoration as reparation which is offered to God is the same as that offered to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The reparation which the Immaculate Heart of Mary calls for is not a human thing or an act related to worship – such as, for instance, building a Church, practising a devotion, making an act of consecration. Mary does not

call for symbolic reparation, but for the living mystical reality which is our wholesale offering to the holy, eternal God who is Love. She calls for the adoration of God, for our commitment, our adoration, in this our concrete world, which has distanced itself from God through the sin of Adam. This adoration can only be accomplished through our offering, which is linked, in this earthly life, with many sufferings. The offering of the whole human personality contains in itself the reparation which is offered simultaneously to God, to the Divine Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. True reparation consists only in such an offering, and not in certain external acts of reparation; moreover, only such reparation contains also the efficacy with which a person can make the offering on behalf of others.

Mary calls for this reparation to her Immaculate Heart as a necessary duty owed by each person, and not as a practice of «free» devotion, beyond what one might consider «normal». She calls for the mystical reality of reparation not only for something that consists partially or totally in a symbolic offering, which also forms part of mystical reparation and is accomplished simultaneously with it. She calls for the mystical offering of reparation in union with the sacrifice of the Cross of Jesus, which the Angel taught to the little Shepherds and which we too pray: «Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference with which He Himself is offended. And, through the infinite merits of His most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of poor sinners.»

In this offering, the consecration, the sanctification, the purification and the reparation are the one mystical realisation. With this living offering we offer to God our adoration, and we collaborate with Our Lady both in our own sanctification and in that of others. Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary reveals the purification of one's own heart. Mary asks for this purification and sanctification of our heart, which necessarily embraces and penetrates our whole personality. The offering which we owe to God the Holy will thus be at the same time reparation, purification and reparation for others, as well as being reparation and consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Mary points to her own Immaculate Heart in order to hasten our interiority, to draw our eyes inwards, towards our own heart, and She assures us that it is only from within, from the heart, that we can accomplish this purification, consecration, reparation and sanctification.

I. The place of Mary in the Mystery of Christ

Divine revelation presents to us Christ as Saviour of fallen mankind, for whom He made reparation. But it also tells us that creation is rooted in Jesus, God and man. The mystery of salvation by Christ is thus the basis of the entire human existence. Since the beginning, human beings have been introduced by the Holy Spirit into a mystical union with Christ and share in the immortal life of Christ by whom they were created. Thus, since the beginning, the Name of God has been engraved in human nature, since human beings were created in the image

and likeness of God (Gen. 1, 26). His «Name» comes from Christ himself, because «Christ is the image of the unseen God» (2 Cor. 4, 4; Col. 1, 15) and the first man was created in accordance with this portrait of Christ, God and Man. God really communicated to human beings his own Holy Name, and this divine name is indelibly inscribed within them. The Name of God in a man is part of the holiness of God; it represents the absolute transcendence of God above all creatures, and man possesses the power, the strength, the irradiation, the attraction, the supremacy of God over all creation, having within him the Holy Spirit who is Love. In giving his own Name to man, God gave him his Holiness and his dominion over the whole of creation. He wished to make man's inner being part of his own life; he wished his Holy Spirit to dwell in the heart of man. Thus man, created in the image and likeness of God, became, in Christ, the lord of creation.

This means that the ray of the divine light entered invisibly into the inner being of each human personality so that in this way he or she, too, can act in the likeness of God. Man shares in the holiness, the power of irradiation and spiritual attraction of God. In this consists the reign of man, the royal reign in holiness, and over man hovers the blessing of God. The reign of man is a living dynamic moment of his being as the image and likeness of God and, in this his reign, man must exercise his spiritual power of irradiation and attraction over other creatures.

This fundamental truth can be read on every page of Sacred Scripture. God revealed and communicated to men his Holy Name and seeks to proclaim it so that, when his Name, his Spirit and his «Law» live in the hearts of men, man sanctifies himself by the Holy Name of God. The Name of God will thus be the strength, the liberating and saving power of man. God gave to his chosen ones the «name» by which He calls them, and He calls each one by his or her own name. And this «giving to men his Name» is linked with the blessing and spread of the divine blessing; and the blessing of God, which has its basis in his chosen ones, can also be transmitted to others with whom they come into contact. God himself is with them as belonging to Him, God will give them his blessing, the communication of the divine Name being a communication of holiness and of divine strength, and God will transmit to men the power to save and sanctify others. It will thus be the extension and transmission of blessing and of grace.

The meaning and the power of possessing the divine name existed in the lives of all the patriarchs and chosen ones of God, and is very visible in the life of Jacob after his nocturnal fight (Gen. 32, 24-31); the moments described reveal the significance of the naming of Jacob and the content of the name «Israel». «Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you are bound to and strengthened by God and you will have power over men.»

Through this naming for his «vocation» in Christ, God transforms the inner man and gives him his own Name, so that He can be glorified in order that his holiness, glory, power and might may shine forth and irradiate. The decisive factor will be his own sanctification, which, in man, will be at the same time the glorification of the divine Name. The Name of God must abide in the human

person, holy and glorified, in the whole of his life; the inner man was created solely for the glorification of the divine Name and of Christ; this is his principal destiny, the very first which he must accomplish.

To be «image and likeness of God» in Christ is the true holiness of man, whose root is the dwelling of the divine Spirit of Christ in the human heart. Each human being was destined to possess this holiness of Christ, and this mystical union with him must form the inner man, because this structure is located indelibly in his interior.

However, if man turns his back on this being of his, his belonging totally to God, he will also turn his back on his centre and his end.

Adam, was not only the first image and likeness of God in Christ, but also the type of Christ, of the universal Head of the whole human race. He was created for mystical union with Christ and only in Him was located the entire reason for his existence. The reign of holiness of Christ is, since the beginning, the universal power of the entire human race. Adam's misdemeanour, as a type of Christ, was to steal the likeness of God, and this affected the whole human race by introducing the reign of sin into creation. Satan became master of this world in the desires of men turned away from God and in their corporal decadence. Adam transformed the human race into a «wicked generation» and each person into a «living» image and likeness of sin and unbelief.

The total perversion and depravation of this generation, unbelieving and therefore evil, is clearly described throughout Holy Scripture both in the words of the prophets and in the various happenings, as well as in Christ himself and, in the most dramatic way, in the process of his death on the cross.

The absolute decree of the world and of God's salvation is the recapitulation in Christ, God and Man. «Recapitulation» is the bringing together and concentration of the entire process of the order of the whole world and of salvation in Christ, Head of creation, in the Kairos of fulfilment and in the perfection, in the «fullness of time». The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is hence the «Kairos» of fulfilment, and the carrying out of all the promises made in the course of the history of the world and the definitive and total victory in the course of this world perverted by the sin of Adam. The cross is, for the entire human race, the universal and absolute power of victory over the world. Hence the salvation of man, the growth of the mystery of Christ in individuals and in the building up of the Mystical Body of Christ is not a temporal process within this world, but is the detachment, the release (purification, expiation) of this inverted and unbelieving world from the lack of unity and detachment from space and time, it is the growth of man in the eternal mystery of Christ, in the «Kairos of recapitulation», of realisation and completion. Man can only save himself from the spiritual and physical slavery of sin by uniting himself to God in the power of the divine Spirit of Christ. Only thus can he glorify the Name of God holy and immortal.

The recapitulation of salvation is the total victory over the universal misfortune of sin, through the humiliation of Christ in the death of the Cross. Thus, through the divine-human life of Christ, the pride of Adam, which had been the inner root of the revolt against God and of the

corruption, was broken. The death and resurrection of Christ is the ontological power of the victory over death, in order to lead the new man back to immortality. The recapitulation is thus the principle, the centre and the end of the new order of the world and of salvation, the Kairos of the definitive and total fulfilment and completion.

Mary, too, is to be found with Christ, with the Kairos of fulfilment and completion, in the course of the world, that is, in the absolute Christocentric order of the world and of salvation, in the «fullness of time» and in the «moment of accomplishment», as we see in the revelation of Sacred Scripture and the whole patristic tradition, in this total ontological and universal recapitulation. Mary possesses an absolute and universal importance in the salvation of humanity. Mary is (?) Eve, and was destined and substituted, from the beginning, for the wife of the first created man, who occupied an important place in the disaster of the fall. According to the absolute decree of God over the world and salvation, Mary is the realisation and fulfilment, the recapitulation of Eve, as Christ is the realisation and fulfilment of Adam. Hence she is with Christ the universal principle, the co-principle of the total victory and of the destruction of the disaster of sin. From the beginning, thanks to the perfect, intentional and ontological integrity of her entire corporal and spiritual personality, Mary is absolutely immune from the elements of the disaster of sin, in perfect holiness: she is immaculately unscathed, with eternal virginity, and so she takes part in the victory of the saving power of Christ which embraces the whole world. Mary is the perfect image and likeness of God in Christ who, due to the fall of our first parents, was not transformed into the image of sin.

But the unharmed inner centre is her Immaculate Heart, because into this pure heart was poured the love of God by the indwelling of the divine Spirit of Christ. From this centre, the holiness of Christ holds sway and reigns in the entire life of Mary; and thus the spiritual horizon and the whole radiation of the action of Mary is extended over the whole of humanity, and in and all times.

Mary is free from all enslavement to the disaster of sin: she contains the realisation of the prophecy: «Hail full of grace» (Luke 1, 28). «Rejoice with joy, daughter of Zion» (Zac. 9, 9). She exults in the joy of freedom: she concentrates in herself the universal richness of grace won by Christ, as «blessed ... among all women» (Luke 1, 42) and she will be borne witness to in the mystery of Christ on the sacrifice of the cross, in the Kairos of the perfect prophecy, as the true «Mother of the living». Mary concentrates in herself absolutely, universally and perfectly the realisation and the accomplishment of the mystery «of the Church», in other words the mystical union of man with Christ in his Holy Spirit.

«Most Holy Trinity, ... I offer You...»

In her last book «How I see the Message ...» Sister Lucia refers to this mystical prayer taught to them in the

third apparition by the Angel. She says: «This prayer was for me a great link in my union with God, a link which grasps me, takes hold of me, indissolubly engraved in my heart.»

Let us learn it, too, and so collaborate with Our Lady in our own sanctification and in the sanctification of others. Moreover, our collaboration must be accompanied by many sacrifices and sufferings.

In her book «Calls of the Message of Fatima», Lucy states that during the very first apparition of Our Lady she asked them: «*Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?*» To which I replied in the name of all three: «*Yes, we are willing!*»

At the time, this reply was given spontaneously and in ignorance, because I had not the remotest idea what it really meant nor what its full implications were. But I never regretted it; on the contrary I renew it every day, asking God for the grace and strength that I need to keep it faithfully until the end.

This question of Our Lady's reminds me of the one Jesus put to the two sons of Zebedee, when they asked Him to grant them the two first seats in the Kingdom of Heaven: «*But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."*» (Mt 20, 22).

In order to attain salvation, we all have to drink of the chalice of self-sacrifice, renouncing our own illicit desires, our evil inclinations, our own exaggerated desire for comfort; while at the same time we must embrace whatever sacrifices life asks of us, whether material and physical, or moral, social and spiritual.

This kind of self-denial comes to everyone, even to those who do not have the happiness of possessing the gift of faith. They, too, are confronted by the need to make sacrifices, because the whole of humanity is marked by the sign of the redeeming cross of Christ, even when they are not aware of it, or do not wish to take advantage of it. We all have to carry that part of the cross of Christ which falls to us in the work of Redemption, because the cross weighs on account of sin, or rather, sin brings with it the weight of the cross.

In fact, it was in order to cleanse us from the stain of sin that Jesus Christ took upon Himself the weight of the Cross. But if this act of Christ is to be of benefit to us, each of us must take up his or her own cross with faith and love and carry it after Christ and in union with Christ; in other words, there is a need for sacrifice, accepted and offered to God with Christ for our own sins and for those of our brothers and sisters. It is in this sense that the Message asks us all, because it is addressed to all: «*Are you willing to offer yourselves to God and bear all the sufferings He wills to send you, as an act of reparation for the sins by which He is offended, and of supplication for the conversion of sinners?*»

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